

**EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION**

TEL: 880-2-8855500

FAX: 880-2-9881677, 9885688

E-MAIL: [DhakaPA@state.gov](mailto:DhakaPA@state.gov)

WEBSITE: <http://dhaka.usembassy.gov>



**REMARKS  
BY  
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA  
“RECOGNITION OF NRB’S AND SUPPORTIVE ORGANIZATIONS IN  
BANGLADESH”  
NRB CONFERENCE  
PAN PACIFIC SONARGAON HOTEL, DHAKA  
AUGUST 17, 2013**

The Honorable Governor of the Bangladesh Bank Dr. Atiur Rahman

Ibrahim Khaled , Distinguished Economist

Shekil Chowdhury, Chairman, Center for NRB

... and distinguished Non-Resident Bangladeshis from around the world

Asalaam ‘malaikum and good morning

Non Resident Bangladeshi ...

By definition, a Non Resident Bangladeshi does not live in Bangladesh

So then ... why are you all here?

I know the answer.

You are here for the same reason I am here.

You, like me, care deeply about this country; you, like me, care deeply about the wonderful people of Bangladesh.

That is why we are all here ... none of us has to be here today ... we are here because we want to be ... we are here because we want to give to Bangladesh; we want to help Bangladesh; we want to help build a middle income Bangladesh; indeed, we want to help create Sonar Bangla.

Sonar Bangla? Yes, I believe in Sonar Bangla. I believe in a Bangladesh where all have the means to provide their families good, safe housing, ample, nutritious food, good healthcare and quality education.

I believe Bangladesh could be/should be the next Asian Tiger ... can you imagine that? This country ... Bangladesh ... once called by a famous person some years ago an international basket case ... that same basket case is poised to become Asia's next economic miracle ... not bad for a basket case!

I am not alone in this vision of Bangladesh as the next Asian Tiger. McKinsey Report, Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan all share my vision of Bangladesh's becoming an Asian tiger...

Imagine Bangladesh as the world's largest exporter of apparel, replacing China.

Imagine Bangladesh as a major player in the global marketplace for shoes, finished leather goods, IT products, generic pharmaceuticals, small freighters and ocean going tugboats, frozen shrimp, bone china, jute products, silk, flowers to the Middle East, and the list goes on.

Imagine Bangladesh, the most densely populated country in the world, becoming food self-sufficient. Actually, this is easy to imagine as the country is already rice-sufficient and could be food self-sufficient within a decade, thanks to the great agriculture revolution underway here.

Imagine Bangladesh capitalizing on its geographical location as the nexus of the Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor, the great trade route of the 21<sup>st</sup> century connecting South Asia with China, Southeast Asia and world beyond.

Imagine a Bangladeshi people who are well educated, who are highly skilled, who migrate to the Middle East, Southeast Asia and elsewhere to help build those countries, not as massive pools of unskilled laborers, but as doctors, nurses, professionals of all sorts, carpenters, electricians, technicians of every nature. Those same Bangladeshis would, of course, build Sonar Bangla at home. Bangladesh needs an education revolution now more than ever.

Of course, building Sonar Bangla will not be easy; challenges are many: deficient ports, railroads, highways; deficient supplies of power and energy; lax respect for workers' rights to freely associate and organize; non-enforcement of fire safety and building code standards as we witnessed in the Rana Plaza and Tazreen Fashions disasters; endemic corruption; poor rule of law; the specter of political instability ... these are serious challenges, no doubt, but with sufficient will each can be overcome.

Building Sonar Bangla ... creating the next Asian Tiger ... in my mind, that is what this conference is all about. I believe, I fervently, deeply believe that you ... you ... the millions of Non Resident Bangladeshis across the globe are critical to realizing our shared vision of Sonar Bangla, of The Royal Bengal Tiger as Asia's next economic power.

Let me say that again: You, the Non Resident Bangladeshis have a critical role to play in building Sonar Bangla, in creating Bangladesh as the next Asian Tiger.

Your success around the world proves that you possess needed entrepreneurial spirit and vision, the problem-solving mentality, the technical know-how, the access to cutting edge technology, the organizational skills, the managerial prowess, and access to resources.

You have all of this and so much more.

Thus, I believe that you are key to unlocking this country's enormous potential. Bangladesh, the seventh largest country on earth, is not a poor country ... it is so rich: fertile land, ample water, friendly climate that allows up to three harvests a year, huge deposits of clean, low sulfur coal, significant gas reserves with the hunt on for more, and, most importantly, the very best people on the planet ... the most energetic, dynamic, generous, creative, entrepreneurial, resilient people that I know.

I truly believe that you, the Non Resident Bangladeshis, are key to unlocking all of this great potential.

That is why, as America's ambassador to Bangladesh, I am working hard to engage the Bangladeshi-American community in helping to unleash this potential. I have traveled to Washington, New York, Portland, Oregon, San Francisco, Silicon Valley, Los Angeles to engage with the Bangladeshi-American diaspora; my next stop will be Michigan and after that Texas. I intend to engage all half-million Bangladeshi-Americans, one of the most successful immigrant groups in America. The Open Skies agreement that America and Bangladesh initialed earlier this month will make travel between our countries even easier.

Bangladeshi-Americans, some of whom are in this room right now, are like all of you ... they want to give back to the country of their heart, the country of their blood.

... and I am determined to help them do so.

Later this year, we will launch a philanthropic portal called LiftBangla that will provide an easy, safe, reliable means for Bangladeshi-Americans to donate to carefully vetted charities and NGOs here in Bangladesh. LiftBangla will enable the Bangladeshi diaspora in America to make contributions in confidence that their gifts will have the intended impact in their homeland. I believe that this portal will over time become a major channel of private sector development assistance to Bangladesh.

Next month, we are launching another initiative ... The Entrepreneurship Initiative. This exciting and innovative initiative will link bright, creative, young Bangladeshi entrepreneurs with successful Bangladeshi-American mentors. The Entrepreneurship Initiative is the handiwork of our Edward M. Kennedy Center for Public Service and the Arts in Dhanmondi, right in the middle of tens of thousands of students and young people. The Initiative will be a platform for mentoring, funding and providing other infrastructural support to Bangladesh's newest generation of entrepreneurs.

I am sure that Non Resident Bangladeshi communities elsewhere around the world are similarly finding ways to contribute most effectively to empowering Bangladesh, most especially the nation's emerging entrepreneurs.

Shekil, I again applaud you and your colleagues for making this event today possible.

And to all of you who may physically reside elsewhere but who are Bangladeshi to the very marrow of your bones, I urge you to give back generously to the country of your blood ... giving more than money, but giving your time, ever precious time, to mentor and support young Bangladeshi entrepreneurs as they strive to build Sonar Bangla.

Thank you.

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*\*As prepared for delivery.*